School Improvement Grants (SIG) - Cohort III Schools
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
September 9, 2013

Seventy-four (74) schools now comprise the State's list of "priority schools." In addition to sixty (60) schools implementing an intervention model under the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program, North Carolina has an additional fourteen (14) schools identified under the North Carolina Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Request (ESEA Flex) submitted and approved by the U.S. Department of Education in May of 2012. The FAQs addressed in this document <u>are specific to the SIG Cohort III schools noted below</u> (item #5).

NC Priority School Types	# of Schools	Interventions Required
1. School Improvement Grants (SIG) Schools	60	Transformation Model or Turnaround Model
2. ESEA Priority Schools	14	Alignment with ESEA Turnaround Principles

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. **How are priority schools identified in North Carolina and how often is the methodology applied?**

Priority schools are identified every three years under ESEA Flex. A school can be identified based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency over a number of years. Additionally, a Title I-participating or Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years will be identified. Lastly, all Tier I or Tier II schools under the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program are included.

2. **We have different types of priority Schools in our LEA. How do we distinguish one from another?**

There are four different types of priority schools in North Carolina. Identified schools in your LEA will fall into one of the four categories noted below:
- SIG Cohort I Schools – originally approved in 2010, these schools completed the final year of the grant in the 2012-13 school year (SY)
- SIG Cohort II Schools – originally approved in 2011, completing the final year of the grant in SY 2013-14

- ESEA Priority Schools - identified under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request approved in 2012
- SIG Cohort III Schools – approved in June, 2013 and implementing year one of SIG in SY 2013-14

3. If a school remains in priority status for 3 years, but is also identified as a reward school for 1 year, could a school possibly be in 2 categories at the same time?

Yes. Schools initially identified as Priority could make substantial progress during the course of the three-year period and could be identified as a Reward school in a subsequent year (as Reward schools are identified annually).

4. Where can I obtain additional information relative to priority schools in North Carolina?

The NC Priority Schools Wiki can be found at http://ncprioritysigsupport.wikispaces.com/ and includes:
- The North Carolina Priority Schools Reference Guide
- Links to District and School rubrics for the NC Comprehensive Needs Assessments
- Additional information on NC Indistar
- The Priority School Quality Review template for SY 2013-14

5. Who are the SIG Cohort III schools?

The following schools are noted as SIG Cohort III schools in NC:

Northwest Elementary (Pitt)	Pines Elementary (Washington)
Snipes Acad. of Arts and Design (New Hanover)	School for Creative Studies (Durham)
Glenn Elementary (Durham)	Dawson Elementary (Halifax)
Everetts Elementary (Halifax)	Inborden Elementary (Halifax)
William R. Davie Middle (Halifax)	D.S. Johnson (Nash Rocky Mount)
The Community Learning Center at Pinckney (Moore)	Leak Street High School (Richmond)
SAGE Academy (Chatham)	Cook Elementary (Forsyth)
Parkview Village Elementary (Guilford)	Druid Hills (CMS)
Hawthorne High (CMS)	Walter G. Byers (CMS)
Kennedy Charter	Crossnore Academy

6. What interventions must SIG Cohort III priority schools implement?

All SIG Schools in North Carolina must continue to implement interventions aligned with one of the four models (Turnaround, Transformation, Restart, or Closure). The majority of SIG schools in North Carolina are currently implementing one of the two models noted below:

Transformation
- Develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness
- Implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies
- Increase learning time and create community-oriented schools
- Provide operational flexibility

Turnaround
- Replace the principal
- Screen existing staff (measuring the effectiveness) and rehire no more than 50%
- Select new staff
- Provide ongoing job-embedded PD
- Adopt new governance structure
- Use data and promote its continuous use
- Extend learning time

FUNDING

7. **What is the period of availability regarding carryover funds for SIG Cohort III priority schools and will additional funds be made available?**

   SIG Cohort III schools in NC:
   - Received an allotment under Program Report Code (PRC) 105 in 2012-13, with funds to expire Sept. 30, 2014
   - Recently received a SIG allotment under PRC 117, with funds to expire Sept. 30, 2015
   - Will receive additional allotments under PRC 117 for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years

8. **Can PRC 105 and/or SIG funds be used for other Title I and/or at-risk schools in our LEA?**

   All funds (via PRCs 143, 105, or 117) are to support the identified SIG/Priority school and may not be used for additional schools in the LEA.

NORTH CAROLINA INDISTAR

9. **Have any changes occurred regarding the NC Indistar tool?**

   All indicators have now been aligned with the NC Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), in addition to the Title I schoolwide components. NCDPI has worked to develop and refine a three-year turnaround process for identified schools with annual focus areas of:

   Year 1 – School Culture and Change
   Year 2 – Aligning and Adjusting

Year 3 – Sustainability

For SIG Cohort III schools, year 1 indicators will be the focus during the 2013-14 SY.

10. What about reports submitted within NC Indistar?

Due dates for the semi-annual report submissions are November 1, 2013 and March 3, 2014. However, LEAs/Schools will no longer need to submit the Priority Schools Metrics report (this data collection is now automated at NCDPI).

Additional due dates for SIG Cohort III schools include:
 Sept. 6, 2013 – Memorandum of Understanding (Upload)
 Sept. 30, 2013 – Annual Interventions Form (Submit)
 Nov. 1, 2013 – Increased Learning Time Summary (Upload)

MONITORING/PRIORITY SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS (PSQRs)

11. How often will our SIG Cohort III school(s) be monitored and what type of feedback can we expect?

Reviews will include 2 visits during the year and ongoing NC Indistar feedback via *Coaching Comments*. Documentation referenced in the NC Priority School Reference Guide (see item #4 above) should be maintained in the "Document Upload" on the NC Indistar Dashboard.

A shift in the report format will provide direct feedback relative to the 28 Key Indicators. For each of the indicators, the quality reviewer will provide one of the following comments:
- "Progress Noted" – indicating that the school team has adequately documented progress and that the on-site visit has confirmed the information provided in NC Indistar.
- "Revise Indicator" – indicating that the school team should revisit/reassess the indicator within NC Indistar.